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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized

Eleventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/54/39) on estimates in respect of eight political missions of which the Security Council is seized: United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, United Nations Office in Burundi, United Nations assistance to the facilitator of the Burundi peace process, United Nations Political Office for Somalia, United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia, United Nations Office in Angola, Security Council expert panels on Angola and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in Africa. During its consideration of the matter, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information.

2. The Committee notes that the report of the Secretary-General is being submitted in the context of actions taken by the Security Council regarding good offices, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building missions. These actions have been taken on the basis of requests from Governments and/or recommendations of the Secretary-General. As indicated in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the report, five of the missions were established before 1998. Resource requirements for those missions were incorporated in the initial appropriation and subsequently the revised appropriation of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986. The other three were newly authorized during the biennium 1998-1999.

3. As indicated in paragraph 38 of the report, the total cost of the activities described in the report is estimated at $9,964,500. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/206 of 18 December 1998, a provision has been included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 for special political missions related to peace and security that are expected to be extended or approved during the course of the biennium. Accordingly, the Assembly is requested to approve the amount of $9,964,500 against the provision for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (see A/54/6/Rev.1, vol. II).

4. The Committee commends the Secretariat for the report, which in its opinion introduces elements of transparency with regard to staff costs and operational expenditures for the special political missions. The Committee notes that the initial estimates in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 contained little detail concerning the estimated requirements for special political missions.

5. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the total that would be charged thus far against the provision for

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special political missions under General Assembly resolution 53/206 amounted to $55,363,100.

6. The Committee requests that future reports on the subject include a consolidated table of requirements by object of expenditure, as well as an indication of the decrease or increase with relation to the previous biennium.

7. The Committee notes that a total of 138 staff are requested for the biennium 2000-2001. In its opinion, table 2, which sets out the staffing requirements in each mission, is misleading because it does not show the total staffing levels for the previous biennium. Furthermore, there are some inconsistencies, such as in the case of local staff for the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville. In table 2, it is indicated that the current level of two local staff would be maintained, but in paragraph 18 there is an indication that there will be a reduction in the number of local staff from three to two. In connection with staffing, the Committee notes that resources are being requested in only one mission for the full biennium. In the opinion of the Committee, staffing requirements in future reports should be calculated in person-months and the previous staffing authorization shown in full.

8. The Advisory Committee also requests that the next report include information to indicate which of the missions that were included in the report were previously in place and which missions had been terminated since the last report. The Committee requests the Secretary-General to monitor carefully the continuation of special political missions. If he determines that a mission is likely to go beyond the biennium, requirements should be included in the initial estimates for the next biennium.

9. Bearing in mind the above comments and conclusions, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the charge of total requirements of $9,964,500 for the eight missions against the provision for special political missions requested under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.